

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The White House's Council on Environmental Quality today released an interim report including guidance for a comprehensive national ocean policy and a framework for improving agency coordination. Many of the report's suggestions mirror initiatives included in H.R. 21, a comprehensive ocean governance reform bill introduced by Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) in January.

The interim report provides guidance for a national ocean policy and a framework for improving agency coordination. It recommends the creation of an interagency National Ocean Council and promotes the adoption of ecosystem-based management structures, both provisions that are included in Rep. Farr's H.R. 21 legislation, known as Oceans-21.

"I'm excited that the White House is moving forward with plans to reform our nation's ocean management strategies," Rep. Farr said following the report's release. "The CEQ report validates a range of recommendations included in reports by U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission, both of which served as foundations for Oceans-21. I look forward to working with the White House to enact H.R. 21 so we can put those much-needed recommendations into action."

The draft report, which will remain open for public comment for 30 days, will be further supplemented by an ongoing series of meetings on marine spatial planning. A final version is expected later this year.

"The White House report highlights our need for responsible stewardship and sustainability of our oceans, and I couldn't agree more that we urgently need to move ahead on these suggestions," said Rep. Farr. "The CEQ report calls for a series of actions that are fundamentally hand-in-hand with those contained in H.R. 21, and I hope Congress will move ahead with this bill quickly."

To read the report or submit a public comment, visit: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/oceans/interimreport/>

#